

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 05647 271856Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
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INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5647

NEA/IAI PLEASE PASS AMB LEWIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, IS, JO
SUBJ: U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCY OPERATIONS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA

1. SUMMARY: GOI REFUSAL THUS FAR TO APPROVE FY 1978 ANERA PROGRAM IN THE WEST BANK RAISES THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OTHER VOLAGS WILL COME UNDER SIMILAR PRESSURE OR WHETHER THIS IS A SPECIAL CASE. EMBASSY IS PRESENTLY INCLINED TO BELIEVE THE LATTER, BUT WE WILL BE ABLE TO JUDGE BETTER AFTER THE ANERA MEETING WITH AVITSOUR OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE ON MAY 1 AND A POSSIBLE EMBASSY REPRESENTATION TO ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY. DEPARTMENT CONCURRENCE IN THIS REPRESENTATION AND GUIDANCE ON WHAT WE SHOULD SAY ARE REQUESTED. END SUMMARY.

2. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE GOI NOTIFIED ANERA ON APRIL 2 THAT ALL OF ITS PROPOSED PROJECTS FOR THE NEXT YEAR HAVE BEEN DISAPPROVED. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY A LETTER ON APRIL 20 TO ANERA REP SELZ PROPOSING PROJECTS WHICH THE GOI WOULD LIKE ANERA TO UNDERTAKE. THIS HARD-NOSED GOI STAND RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT ISRAELI INTENTIONS CONCERNING THE FUTURE OPERATIONS OF ALL U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IT IS NOT YET
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 05647 271856Z

CLEAR WHETHER THE GOI POSITION IS INTENDED TO BE:
-- A BARGAINING PLOY WITH ANERA WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY BE RELAXED AFTER SOME DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS;
-- A CONSIDERED MOVE TO FORCE ANERA OUT OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES;
-- PART OF A GENERAL TIGHTENING UP OF ISRAELI POLICY ON ALL VOLAG ACTIVITIES IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

3. IT IS NO SECRET THAT THE GOI IS SUSPICIOUS OF ANERA BECAUSE IT CONSIDERS THE ORGANIZATION TO HAVE PRO-PALESTINIAN AND ANTI-ISRAELI BIAS. ANERA HAD PROBLEMS IN THE PAST IN GETTING ITS PROJECTS APPROVED, BUT THE DIFFERENCES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED EVENTUALLY TO ANERA'S SATISFACTION. THE GOI HAS ALSO TRIED OVER TIME TO GET ALL VOLAGS TO:

- A. CONSULT WITH IT CLOSELY IN ALL STAGES OF PROJECT PLANNING AND EXECUTION;
- B. CONSIDER FAVORABLY GOI PROJECT PROPOSALS;
- C. CONCENTRATE ON REFUGEES, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN RURAL AREAS.

4. VOLAGS SUCH AS CARE AND CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE, WHICH HAVE REASONS OF THEIR OWN FOR PROGRAMS WHICH CONFORM CLOSELY TO GOI WISHES, HAVE HAD RELATIVELY FEW PROBLEMS WITH THE ISRAELIS. ANERA AND THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION/SAVE THE CHILDREN ARE IN A MORE TENUOUS POSITION. ANERA PREFERS TO CONCENTRATE ON TRAINING PROGRAMS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WHICH INVOLVE URBAN POPULATIONS AND ARAB ORGANIZATIONS - BOTH OF WHICH MAKE THE GOI UNEASY. ANERA HAS TRIED TO CONVINCE THE ISRAELIS THAT THE PROJECTS ARE SOUND, THAT THE ORGANIZATIONS (SUCH AS COOPERATIVES) ARE NON-POLITICAL AND THAT ANERA ACTIVITIES ARE DESIGNED TO AVOID COMPETING WITH OTHER VOLAGS FOCUSING ON THE RURAL POPULATION.

5. HART AND DEAN MET WITH SELZ OF ANERA ON APRIL 26 TO DISCUSS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 05647 271856Z

HIS PROBLEMS AND TO EXPLORE WHETHER EMBASSY ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE NEEDED. SELZ IS TO SEE AVITSOUR OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE ON MAY 1 TO GET A READING OF GOI INTENTIONS CONCERNING ANERA. AVITSOUR WILL BE TOLD THAT ANERA MUST REJECT THE BULK OF THE GOI PROPOSALS BECAUSE THEY OVERLAP WITH UNRWA ACTIVITIES OR WOULD BE TOO CLOSELY LINKED TO GOI PROGRAMS: BOTH OF WHICH WOULD VIOLATE ANERA'S AGREEMENT WITH AID/W. AFTER THE MEETING, SELZ WILL GIVE US HIS RECOMMENDATION ON NEXT STEPS. WE TOLD SELZ THAT THE EMBASSY IS PREPARED TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GOI FOREIGN MINISTRY CONCERNING UNREASONABLE TREATMENT OF VOLAGS IF THIS SEEMS ADVISABLE AFTER HIS SESSION WITH AVITSOUR. WE COULD ALSO REMIND THE GOI THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS, IN FUNDING VOLAGS UNDER MIDDLE EAST SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FUND, HAS LAID DOWN GUIDELINES FOR THEIR OPERATIONS AND THAT WE BELIEVE ALL VOLAGS ARE COMPLYING WITH INTENT OF CONGRESS.

6. WE WOULD APPRECIATE WASHINGTON APPROVAL OF THIS ACTION AND ANY INSTRUCTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE ON WHAT WE SHOULD SAY TO THE ISRAELIS.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE GOI IS INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE ABOUT OUTSIDE ACTIVITY IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, BOTH BECAUSE OF

THE SECURITY SITUATION THERE AND WHAT THE ISRAELIS CONSIDER FOREIGN MEDDLING, OUR GUESS IS THAT THEIR RECENT ACTIONS ARE DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY AT ANERA. WE WILL HAVE A BETTER READING ON THIS AFTER THE TALKS WITH THE MFA AND MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE.

8. CONGEN JERUSALEM CONCURS IN SUBSTANCE OF THIS MESSAGE.
VIETS

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